

Temporary Water Transfers Information and Guidance



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

MATTHEW RODRIGUEZ
SECRETARY FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

State Water Resources Control Board

Overview

The State Water Board is committed to working diligently with water users throughout the state to find appropriate and timely solutions to their urgent, drought-related water needs. Temporary water transfers offer flexibility in the allocation and use of water, and may provide a solution for certain drought-related water needs. Under the temporary water transfer program, a water right holder can formally request or “petition” the State Water Board to authorize the temporary transfer of surplus water to another water user. Upon approval of a temporary transfer order, the petitioner forgoes use of some or all water under their right so that the transferee may have access to water that would not otherwise be available. Temporary transfer orders last *up to one year*.

Eligible Parties

Right holders with permits and licenses are eligible to file a petition for a temporary change involving the transfer of water.

What exactly are water transfers?

Water transfers are usually arrangements between two parties, one with a surplus water supply and one in need of additional water. These two parties reach a mutually acceptable arrangement regarding price and quantity.

What types of change can I request under the temporary water transfer program?

Current right holders can petition to temporarily change the point of diversion, place of use, or purpose of use to facilitate a transfer.

How do I request a temporary water transfer?

You may request a temporary water transfer by completing a [Petition for Change Form](#) and mailing it to the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights at PO Box 2000, Sacramento, CA 95812-2000. If you are facing an imminent threat to public health due to drought, notify staff by writing a note at the top of your petition form “Imminent threat to public health”.

How much will it cost?

The filing fee for a change petition involving a

FELICIA MARCUS, CHAIR | THOMAS HOWARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

temporary transfer of water is \$2,000 plus \$0.30 for each acre-foot of water that the petitioner seeks to transfer in excess of 10 acre-feet. See the [Division of Water Rights Fee Schedule](#) for more information.

What does the State Water Board need in order to issue a temporary transfer order?

Current law allows transfers of water involving the amount of water that would have otherwise been consumptively used or stored by the water right holder in the absence of the proposed temporary change. Prior to issuing a temporary transfer order, the State Water Board must find, and may impose conditions to ensure, that the proposed transfer will not cause injury to any lawful water user and will not result in an unreasonable effect on fish, wildlife, or other instream beneficial uses.

How long will it take?

The State Water Board will make every effort to process drought-related, temporary water transfer petitions as quickly and efficiently as possible. Processing time will vary by the complexity of the change requested, the completeness and accuracy of information provided in the change petition, and the potential for adverse effects on other water users and public trust resources such as fish and wildlife. The Division of Water Right’s goal is a 60-day processing time for action on drought-related temporary transfer petitions. Here are some examples of recent temporary transfer [notices](#) and [orders](#).

What other parties may be involved in temporary transfer approval?

Depending on your water right and where the water will be transferred to, you may need to contact [California Department of Water Resources](#) or [U.S. Bureau of Reclamation](#).

What if I have questions?

If you would like to discuss your particular situation with a staff person who works in your geographic area, see the permitting and licensing staff contact information provided [here](#).

What is the process for a Temporary Transfer?

